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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature reveals that although effective personnel evaluation is critical to the improvement of educational institutions, productive evaluation policies and procedures are rarely used currently. The low quality of many of the procedures now used is a major reason why efforts to base employment and salary decisions on evaluations are resisted by the personnel to be evaluated. Programs designed to increase teachers' accountability could impair educational improvement if sound evaluation components are not built in. Several public, private, and professional agencies have been working to develop standards for evaluation programs, and promising results are beginning to emerge. Thirty-one references are cited. (PGD)

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LITERATURE RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL EVALUATIONS: THE NEED FOR STANDARDS[1]

by

Daniel L. Stufflebeam James R. Sanders

The need for standards for judging personnel evaluations in education stems from the inevitable and vitally important role of personnel evaluation in education. It is especially evident in the widespread and substantiated dissatisfaction with current educational practice; it is reflected in mandates for more and better evaluations of the work of educators from national commissions and study groups that have been highly critical of education; it is inherent in efforts to devise new and better systems for evaluating educational personnel; and, of course, the need is highlighted by the fact that published standards for evaluations so far have excluded the area of personnel evaluation. Each of these points requires some elaboration.

Virtually all educational institutions evaluate the qualifications and work of at least some of their personnel--specifically, at the points of certification, selection, assignment, promotion, award of tenure, and allocation of special recognition or monetary awards (Cascio, 1982; Fox and Egan, 1982; Heneman, Schwab, Fossum, and Dyer, 1983). Some institutions, but far too few, also use evaluation as a means to provide feedback for improving

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[1] A presentation to the 1986 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in a session entitled, "Filling a Void - The Development of Standards for Evaluations of Educational Personnel." The session organizer was Dr. Arnold M. Gallegos, Dean of the College of Education at Western Michigan University. Presenters were Dr. James R. Sanders, Associate Director of the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University, and Dr. Daniel L. Stufflebeam, Director of the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University. The standard-setting work described during this session has been undertaken by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. Both Dr. Sanders and Dr. Stufflebeam are members of the Joint Committee. Associations with members on the Joint Committee include AASA, AASPA, AEA, AERA, AFT, AMECD, APA, ASCD, ECS, NAESP, NASSP, NCME, NEA, and NSBA.

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the performance of educational personnel (Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease, 1983; Deal, Newfield, and Rallis, 1982; McGreal, 1983). Parents and college students use evaluation of one kind or another to identify and avoid poor instructors (Centra, 1982). In sum, personnel evaluations are pervasive in educational institutions as one part of a total system designed to support and assure excellent service by educators (or improving or eliminating those who deliver poor service e.g., Andrews, 1985; Bridges and Groves, 1984).

However, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the amount and quality of personnel evaluation in education. Community groups, school boards, and educators often decry the near absence of personnel evaluation in their schools or the superficiality and "lack of teeth" in the systems that do exist (Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease, 1983). Scriven (1983) has agreed that such claims often are valid. He places much of the blame for avoidance or superficiality of personnel evaluation on a faulty view of evaluation which, in the name of objectivity, passively leaves evaluation of performance to external, independent, and, often ineffective agents. Instead, Scriven said that the true professionals must evaluate their work and actively and openly seek to have others evaluate it. From a somewhat different point of view, Soar, Medley & Coker (1983, p. 246) stated that teachers' resistance to evaluation is reasonable, since evaluations now in use are "subjective, unreliable, open to bias, closed to public scrutiny, and based on irrelevancies." These concerns have been echoed by Peterson (1984). This position is consistent with the extensive research study of teacher evaluation recently released by the Rand Corporation. After an exhaustive analysis of relevant research and operating teacher evaluation systems, Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Pease (1983) concluded that most extant systems are illogical,

simplistic, unfair, counterproductive, or, simply, unproductive. Thus, many concerned and informed groups agree that there is a need both to increase the amount and improve the quality of personnel evaluation in education. Also, the publication of several national reports pointing out problems and shortcomings in education has brought into even sharper focus the crucial need for evaluating and providing direction for improving the performance of educational personnel (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1983; A Nation At Risk, 1983; Educating Americans for the 21st Century, 1982; Making the Grade, 1983). These reports "all acknowledge that one of the most pressing problems to be faced is attracting and retaining excellent teachers for our nation's schools" (NEA, 1983). This recognition clearly attests to the underlying need for effective and sound personnel evaluation procedures.

Extensive media coverage and political rhetoric, frequently partisan, and debate resulting from these reports have generated a number of proposals and programs for the improvement of teaching and learning that involve personnel evaluation. Commonly proposed are merit pay, career ladder and/or master teacher plans. (Furtwengler, 1985; Klein, 1983; Wilson, 1985; Wise, Darling - Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein, 1984). Many states are now committed to teacher competency testing (Lehmann and Phillips, 1985; Vlaanderen, 1982; Wuhs and Manatt, 1983). Some of these responses oversimplify, or step over, the problems involved in ensuring quality teaching. But they have captured public attention, and educators are faced with both a problem and an opportunity. They could become unwitting accomplices in efforts that impair education if they willingly accept simplistic solutions. Or they could help move the profession forward if, as one avenue of action, they convert the public fervor for improved teaching into support for sound programs for evaluating educational personnel.

School districts and state education departments are addressing the public concern for improving education by moving aggressively to devise better systems for evaluating educational personnel. Some of this work is reflected in a recent monograph by Hord, et al., (1982). The Rand Corporation also recently released in-depth case studies of innovative personnel evaluation systems being implemented by four school districts (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein, 1984). Several states, including Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee are developing new evaluation systems on which to base decisions about certification, incentive pay, and career advancement. A number of school districts are implementing the clinical supervision approach advocated by Madeline Hunter (Hunter, 1979, 1980), Richard Manatt (Manatt, Palmer and Hidlebaugh, 1976), and others; and recent reports by the Educational Research Service (1976, 1983) and McGreal (1983) reflect a number of interesting recent developments in the area of educational personnel evaluation.

The Rand Corporation case studies of four districts selected to represent diverse teacher evaluation processes and organizational environments were among the most in-depth investigations of teacher evaluation found in the literature. While these districts went about their evaluation tasks in different ways, they had four practices in common that the study team viewed as responsible for the superiority of these evaluation programs (Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin, and Bernstein, 1984.) These "superiority factors" were "organizational commitment, evaluator competence, teacher-administrator collaboration, and strategic compatibility."

Field-based efforts such as those noted above are responsive to the problems of educational personnel evaluation, and many apparently are proceed-

ing under careful and informed direction, with political and monetary support. In addition to addressing local problems unique to particular communities, these programs have the potential for providing operational models that can be adopted or adapted by other school districts and state education departments. But if either of these ends is to be realized, new and innovative personnel evaluation systems need to be assessed against, and made to meet, widely accepted principles of sound personnel evaluation. Then, and only then, can both public and educational institutions be assured that their efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of personnel evaluation will proceed on sound grounds. The Rand study's identification of success factors is an important step in the right direction, but further study and wider involvement is needed.

The crux of the problem is that the professions of education and evaluation have not reached agreement on what standards should be used to judge personnel evaluation systems. While these professions have collaborated in developing standards for judging program evaluations, they have explicitly excluded the area of personnel evaluation (Joint Committee, 1981). Among the reasons for this avoidance is that personnel evaluation provokes even more anxiety than program evaluation and, therefore, is often avoided. The state of the art in this area has remained stagnant for decades, and evaluation practitioners and school practitioners have not developed a sound working relationship on which to proceed collaboratively in such a controversial area. Whatever the reasons, the public and the professional education establishment need standards for judging educational personnel evaluation systems. Such standards have not existed, and the Joint Committee intends to fill the void.

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